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This series is all about the crossruff (with a warning about when NOT to do it!)

VB#7 The Crossruff 1 SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 14/06/2014	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North		East	
♠ Q653		♠ AK72	
♥ KQT8		♥ 4	
♦ 74		♦ T63	
♣ KJ9		♣ T6432	
West		South	
♠ JT4		♠ 98	
♥ 6532		♥ AJ97	
♦ KQJ9		♦ A852	
♣ 75		♣ AQ8	

This set of six deals is (nearly) all about the **crossruff**. This play is when you make your trumps separately by ruffing your losers in both hands - dummy and the closed hand.

Many players enjoy this area of the game - often they enjoy it too much! It is important to know when it is the right play to ruff in both hands and when it is not.

The feature of the crossruff is that you do not draw trumps - you use as many of your trumps as possible to ruff losers. If you use this play when you shouldn't (when you should be drawing trumps) you will end up with egg on your face.

Hand 1 is a case in point. A 4-4 major-suit fit reached via Stayman.

Do we need to draw trumps? If so, ruffing in both hands is the *wrong play*.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1NT
P	2♣	P	2♥
P	4♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♦ K

Now, on the sight of dummy you (South) should pause and make a **Plan** in 4♥ (we make no apology for the continual beating of this particular drum).

A **Count of tricks** (winners and losers) shows there to be... four Heart winners, one Diamond winner and three Club winners. So that's eight winners. In terms of losers there are two Spade losers and one Diamond loser. As so often we have a discrepancy - eight winners, three losers.

We only have two ways of disposing of losers, we can either **trump them** or **dump them**. There is no source of tricks in either dummy or declarer's hand that would allow any discards, so there is to be no dumping. The only way that we can dispose of losers, then, is to trump them and we have to ruff two losers to raise the winner count to ten.

The important point, though, is that we must not be seduced into ruffing in both hands - with the 4-1 trump break that would be fatal. We either have to ruff two Diamonds on the table OR two Spades in hand - but not both.

So, win the ♦A at trick one and concede a Diamond. The ball is now in the defenders' court. As it happens, West switches to the ♠J and the defenders play three rounds of Spades at us. Now the **Plan** changes - we aim to ruff two Spades in hand (ruff the third Spade, cross to a Club, ruff the last Spade and draw trumps).

If West were to play a red card instead of the ♠J (on many occasions he is very likely to play a trump) we ruff a Diamond on table, cross to hand, ruff another Diamond on table, draw four rounds of trumps and cash the Clubs.

Ten tricks come from six trump tricks, one Diamond and three Clubs. Note that drawing trumps would be fatal, as would any attempt to play this deal on some sort of *crossruff*. If you ruff in both hands you can never make three Club tricks as West will ruff the third round.

It is a major error with this type of deal to ruff in both hands.



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VB#7 The Crossruff 1 SA

Date: 14/06/2014

Dealer: East

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Contract: 4S

By: South

Board #: 2

Vulnerable: N / S

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ Q

This deal is designed to provide a sharp contrast with Hand 1. As South you reach 4♠ and West leads the ♦Q, trapping your ♦K.

Whatever you do at tricks one, two and three the ♦K is sandwiched and the defenders take the first three tricks. East then gets off lead with his little trump, which is taken with dummy's ♠5.

Now what? Well, let's try a **Count and Plan**, shall we? You can see five trump tricks and two Aces. So there are seven top tricks with the possibility of a eighth trick via the Club finesse. However, you can see that your losing Hearts can all be ruffed in the dummy. What is more, there is no need to draw trumps on this deal *because* (apart from the Aces) *you have no side-suit winners to cash*.

So you can cash the ♣A, ruff a Club, cash the ♥A and then successively ruff Hearts and Clubs in dummy and hand respectively. A forlorn East, you may note, is forced to *under-ruff* on the last two tricks.

This hand is a classic, textbook example of a crossruff.

<p>North</p> <p>♠ J985</p> <p>♥ 8</p> <p>♦ K42</p> <p>♣ AQ543</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ 764</p> <p>♥ K5</p> <p>♦ A65</p> <p>♣ KT982</p>	
<p>West</p> <p>♠ 3</p> <p>♥ QT9743</p> <p>♦ QJT9</p> <p>♣ 76</p>			
<p>South</p> <p>♠ AKQT2</p> <p>♥ AJ62</p> <p>♦ 873</p> <p>♣ J</p>			

On this deal you reach a perfectly normal game contract. The play, however, is very different from that of Hand 1.

Here there is no side-suit to establish or cash. So how should you make the contract?



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VB#7 The Crossruff 1 SA

Date: 14/06/2014

Dealer: South


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Contract: 4H

By: South

Board #: 3

Vulnerable: E / W

		North		
		♠ A954		
		♥ J963		
		♦ K		
		♣ K643		
West		East		
♠ Q6		♠ JT732		
♥ 8754		♥ 2		
♦ AQ873		♦ J52		
♣ 97		♣ QJT8		
		South		
		♠ K8		
		♥ AKQT		
		♦ T964		
		♣ A52		

Here you reach a game contract and have to decide how to time the play carefully.

If you don't get it precisely right the opponents have a counterplay. See how you fare.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
P	2♣	P	2♥
P	4♥	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ 4

As South you arrive in 4♥ after another Stayman auction. West (rot his fetid soul) leads a trump, which starts to cut down on your ruffing options.

Count and Plan. You can see that you have eight easy tricks (two Spades, four trumps, and two Clubs) so need to up the winner count by two. That can be achieved by ruffing twice in one hand or the other.

However, this hand contains a small trap... suppose you decide to ruff two Spades in hand. This would leave you very badly placed as West would throw off a Club (or two) as you did this. Now you would have difficulty making the ♣A K.

The best play is to concede a Diamond at trick two. West takes the ♦A and continues with a trump (good defense - curse him). Now you should *cash your outside winners*. By playing off the ♠A K and the ♣A K you prevent West discarding any of the cards from these suits when you start ruffing things.

Having taken your black-suit winners it's plain sailing - just ruff Diamonds on table and Spades in hand. This crossruff lands you four extra trump tricks to go with the two Hearts and the ♠A K and ♣A K already made. Contract secured...



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VB#7 The Crossruff 1 SA	Contract: 7S
Date: 14/06/2014	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
P	4♦	X	4♥
P	4♠	P	5♣
P	5♦	P	7♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ 4

We have to make a small confession here at VuBridge. This deal (in its entirety) has been "borrowed" from an article on the internet. To give the hand its full attribution it comes from *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play* by Julian Laderman, which is a whole book's worth of interesting bridge hands. Thank you, Julian...

Anyway, South's 7♠ call was more than a little optimistic after the bidding. He knew that North was going to put down a void Diamond (conceivably a singleton ♦A) but that doesn't mean that he anywhere to park all of his five low Diamonds in hand. Dummy hadn't promised five trumps for his 4♦ *splinter bid*.

However, handsome is as handsome does (or something like that). West leads a Diamond in response to his partner's *lead directing Double* and as South you should consider your options.

After ruffing the Diamond you might think about playing East for the ♥A by taking a *ruffing finesse*. So, at trick two you try the effect of the ♥K, hoping to tempt the ♥A out of East's hand. When East plays low (with an air of nonchalance) you decide that he doesn't have it - so you ruff the Heart. Now what?

A count of tricks shows that you can ruff all five Diamonds on table - but what about entries? The only way you can do this is to play the hand on a crossruff. Now, the important rule for a crossruff is to *cash your outside winners first* so here you must cash the ♣A K Q early.

Why? Well, if you don't, East-West will discard Clubs as you are merrily ruffing away in Diamonds and Hearts. In the ending you won't make more than one Club trick and your grand slam will fail.

So... in detail. You ruff the Diamond opening lead, try the ♥K and ruff that when East doesn't play the ♥A. Now you cash the ♣A K Q (crossing your fingers as you do so - if Clubs are not 4-3 you will fail). When that passes off without pain the stage is set for the main act - you can just crossruff the last eight tricks with East-West impotent to prevent you from raking in the lot.

North
 ♠ QJT65
 ♥ KQJT5
 ♦
 ♣ QJT

West
 ♠ 4
 ♥ A9842
 ♦ Q94
 ♣ 9862



East
 ♠ 32
 ♥ 763
 ♦ AKJT7
 ♣ 753

South
 ♠ AK987
 ♥
 ♦ 86532
 ♣ AK4

Here, you are about to play in an optimistic contract. The bidding may overwhelm you but that's not really the point (it's a tad optimistic anyway).

As Hamlet said, "*The play's the thing*".



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VB#7 The Crossruff 1 SA

Date: 14/06/2014

Dealer: South

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Contract: 4S

By: South

Board #: 5

Vulnerable: N / S

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
P	1♦	1♥	1♠
P	2♠	3♥	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♠ 2

This is a deal from 1974 – reported in the *Chicago Tribune* that year by the famous American author Charles H Goren.

Goren wrote: *Against South's 4♠ contract West preferred a trump lead to his partner's suit and South started on a crossruff. Win the ♠8, ♣A, ruff a Club, ♦A ruff a Diamond – curtains! West discarded his Heart and declarer was dead. Eventually the ♥A was ruffed and declarer had to admit defeat.*

The **count of tricks** shows that declarer needs three Aces and seven trump tricks (he can't make more than seven after the Spade lead). So South has to take the precaution of cashing the ♥A before embarking on the crossruff. Nothing can damage him now.

Was the original South unlucky? Well, yes, but this game rewards good technique and players who neglect textbook plays are often “unlucky”.

North

♠ KT98

♥ 742

♦ AJ653

♣ 7

West

♠ 76432

♥ 9

♦ T

♣ KJ9543



East

♠

♥ KQJ865

♦ KQ9742

♣ 6

South

♠ AQJ5

♥ AT3

♦ 8

♣ AQT82

This is another hand culled from the archives - it was reported in a local newspaper recently.

Local paper? - *The Chicago Tribune*.

Recently? Well, in 1974.

Oh, come on! Surely you remember...



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VB#7 The Crossruff 1 SA

Date: 14/06/2014

Dealer: East

[Play this hand online!](#)

Contract: 7S

By: East

Board #: 6

Vulnerable: All

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♠	P
4♦	X	4♥	P
4♠	P	5♣	P
5♦	P	7♠	P
P	P		

Lead: ♠ 4

This deal is, of course, Hand 4 all over again, although it has been twisted 90° anti-clockwise so that you are on opening lead.

As in Hand 4 East-West bid to an optimistic grand slam after your partner has shown Diamond strength with a *lead-directing* Double. So, having been directed, what do you lead?

Leading against a grand slam is potentially expensive. If there is a killing lead then failure to find it will cost your side thousands. What card do you place upon the table here?

By now you know the answer – but should you get it right at the table? Well, the answer is “probably”. Unless the opponents are on some sort of hallucinogenic drugs East has a void Heart and dummy has a void Diamond (conceivably a singleton ♦A). Whatever the exact distribution it does appear that East-West are about to embark on an orgy of crossruffing.

Certainly, any ill-starred attempt to cash the ♥A is going to end in failure and your best form of attack is to try to take out as many trumps as you can by leading a Spade. On this deal, that's a killer.

Declarer has only four trumps in dummy now to deal with five losing Diamonds in hand (the same applies in Hearts – only four trumps to deal with five Hearts). So what can East do? Well, on this lie of the cards – absolutely nothing. He may try to ruff out the ♥A by trumping Hearts in hand, hoping that the ♥A falls in three rounds but that proves to be fruitless. Eventually he runs out of hope and of tricks, going one down.

On any other lead East can cash three rounds of Clubs and crossruff the last ten tricks.

There is some hoary advice written in many bridge books which we will provide for you here. “*Against a grand slam, lead a trump*”. Just because this advice has been around since the time of Theodore Roosevelt doesn't make it wrong...

North
♠ 32
♥ 763
♦ AKJT7
♣ 753

West
♠ QJT65
♥ KQJT5
♦
♣ QJT



East
♠ AK987
♥
♦ 86532
♣ AK4

South
♠ 4
♥ A9842
♦ Q94
♣ 9862

Here, by way of a contrast with the other deals of this set, you are on lead to a high-level contract.

What do you think you should lead? And why?

